CRITICAL REMARKS
ON
Mr. *Rowe's* last Play,
CALL'D,
ULYSSES.
A
Tragedy.

As it was Acted at the

Queen's *Theatre* in the *Hay-Market*.

Vejanius, *Armis*.
Hercules, *ad postem fixis, latet abditus agro*
Ne populum extremo toties, exoret arena.
Horat. *lib. Serm.* iii.

LONDON,

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Prologue.

TO Night, in Honour of the marry'd Life,
Our Author treats you with a Virtuous Wife:
A Lady, who for twenty Years withstood
The pressing Instances of Flesh and Blood.
Her Husband still a Man of Sense reputed,
(Unless this Tale his Wisdom have confuted)
Left her at ripe Eighteen, to seek Renown,
And Battel for a Harlot at Troy *Town.*
To fill his Place, fresh Lovers came in Shoals,
Much such as now-a-days are Cupid's *Tools;*
Some Men of Wit, but the most Part were Fools.
They sent her Billet Deux, *and Presents many*
Of ancient Tea, *and* Thericlean China:
Rail'd at the Gods, toasted her o'er and o'er,
Dress'd at her, danc'd, and fought, and sigh'd, and swore.
In short, did all that Men could do to have her,
And damn'd themselves, to get into her Favour;
But all in vain, the virtuous Dame stood Buff,
And let 'em know, that she was Coxcomb-proof.
Messieurs, *the* Beaux, *what think you of the Matter?*
Don't you believe old Homer *given to flatter?*

Prologue.

When you approach, and pressing the soft Hand,
Favours with well-bred Impudence demand,
Is it in Woman's Weakness to withstand?
Cease to be vain, and give the Sex their Due,
Our English *Wives shall prove this Story true.*
We have our chaste Penelope's, *who mourn*
Their widow'd Beds, and wait their Lord's Return.
We have our Heroes too, who bravely bear
Far from their Home, the Dangers of the War,
Who, careless of the Winter Season's Rage,
New Toils explore, and in new Cares engage:
From Realm to Realm their Chief unweary'd goes,
And restless Journies on, to give the World Repose.
Such are the constant Labours of the Sun,
Whose active glorious Course is never done:
And tho' when hence he parts with us, 'tis Night,
Still he goes on, and lends to other Worlds his Light.
Ye beauteous Nymphs, with open Arms prepare
To meet the Warriors, and reward their Care:
May you for ever kind and faithful prove,
And pay their Days of Toil, with Nights of Love.

CRI-

CRITICAL REMARKS
ON
Mr. *Rowe's* last Play,
CALL'D,
ULYSSES.

Remarks on the Prologue.

I Would not have Mr. *Rowe* take it amiss, that his *Ulysses* is Criticiz'd upon, since the *Cid* (a much better Play, and writ by the Famous *Corneile*) escap'd not the Censure of Mr. *Scudery*, and afterwards pass'd the Examination of the *French* Academy, which was then in its Infancy: However, their Founder and Pa-

tron, Cardinal *Richlieu*, countenanc'd them in this Affair, and was well pleas'd with the Reflections made both for and against the *Cid*.

And indeed it can be no Prejudice to the Author, for if the Remarks be just, they ought to be admitted by every Man of Candor, and they will not escape the Censure of every Man of Judgment: But if they be bare Carping at Words, without Sense or Reason to support them, such Observations will help rather to illustrate the Work, and make it shine the brighter.

Indeed our Author sets out very unluckily in the *Prologue*, which was anciently design'd, (whate'er our modern Poets practise to the contrary) to give the Audience a Taste of the succeeding Entertainment, to let 'em into the Story, or explain some Passages in the *Drama*; but here it's used to ridicule the Hero, and make slight of him, which is recommended in the Play, or at least ought to be, as an Example and Pattern of Greatness of Mind: But instead of that, to undervalue his former Conduct and Wisdom in going to the Siege of *Troy*, is an odd kind of Introduction: For, speaking of *Penelope*, he says,

Her Husband still a Man of Sense reputed,
Unless this Tale his Wisdom have confuted,

Left

Left her at ripe Eighteen, to ſeek Renown,
And battel for a Harlot at Troy *Town.*

An excellent Character! This for his *Hero!* I wonder how it would look to ſpeak out of *Heroicks.* Suppoſe a Perſon aſks me to give him the Character of a fine Gentleman, and I tell him, to illuſtrate his Actions among the reſt, that he's a brave fighting Spark, and Bullies for all the Whores about Town. Now, I fancy, after this, every Body would have a very mean Opinion, both of his Conduct and Courage. This, I humbly conceive, is an Error of his Judgment, and he will thank me for obſerving againſt the next Tragedy he writes: For I cannot believe he could have ſuch a malicious Deſign in his Head, as to Burleſque *Homer*, who had a more ſublime Opinion of his *Grecian* Heroes, and their Cauſe, than our Tragick Author, who thus ridicules it; I had almoſt ſaid, prophanes it.

Since I find our Author ſo much out in his Politicks, of recommending his Play, by laughing at the Story, I ſhall examine if he be not as much out in his *Grammar* too, leaſt he ſhould be too bold in tranſlating *Lucan*, before he be abſolute Maſter of his Mother-Tongue, and write correct *Engliſh*, a thing not ſo eaſy perhaps as

ſome People imagine, tho' almoſt every Body pretends to it; but our Author has found out a new way of expreſſing himſelf.

Rail'd at the Gods, toaſted her o'er and o'er,
Dreſs'd at her, danc'd, and fought, and ſigh'd, and ſwore.

To dreſs at a Woman, is perhaps the moſt particular kind of Phraſe yet made uſe of in any Language: It is new, I dare ſware for it; ſo that according to the ſame kind of way of Expreſſion, a Man muſt ſay, inſtead of *dreſſing* for a Woman, he *dreſſes at her*, *dances at her*, *fights at her*, inſtead of fighting for her; *ſighs at her*, and *ſwears at her*. Very pretty upon my Word, and it was a Pity he did not ſay, *bites at her*; and then he might not have improperly been call'd the *Biter*.

Another Fault I muſt needs obſerve, before I can leave the *Prologue*, that is,

We have our Heroes too, who bravely bear,
Far from their Home, the Dangers of the War.

Now, it ought to have been, *far from Home*, or

far

far from their Homes. But I have ſaid enough of the *Prologue*, and I ſhall only add this of *Horace.*

------- Ab hoc nunc,
Laus ille debetur, & a me gratia major.

Remarks on the firſt Act.

PUrſued *by hoſtile* Trojan *Gods.* They were rather friendly Gods to *Troy*, that purſu'd *Ulyſſes*, their mortal Enemy, than hoſtile Gods: Indeed if he had ſaid *hoſtile* Grecian *Gods*, he had ſaid ſomething to the purpoſe: But I ſuppoſe he found this in his Common-place Book, ſet down when he had been reading of *Virgil*, who ſpeaks of hoſtile *Trojan* Gods purſuiug *Æneas.*

That if oppos'd to him, 'twould make Compariſon
Abſurd and monſt'rous ſeem, as if to Mate
A Mole-hill with Olympus.

I can neither make Senſe, Grammer, Poetry, or any thing elſe, but ſo many Letters, of this Paragraph, *Telemachus* is talking here of his Father *Ulyſſes*, of the Honour of his Name being

deſpiſed,

despised, his State over-run and devour'd by Slaves so vile; and then he says, *it would make Comparison absurd*; what *it*, *the Slaves*? and then, as if to mate a Mole-hill: This is Nonsense without any Harmony, or Gingle of Words to support it, which in other places of this Work he often labours for.

the Minstrels Noise,
Who ministers to Mirth.

The *Minstrels Minister*! Delicate Gingle. But what is the *Minstrels Noise*? A *Person*, that he says, *who* ministers. This Poetick License will ruin all the Grammar-Schools in *England*.

The cruel Arts of Courts. I have heard of the subtle and designing Arts of Courts, that learn People to dissemble Wrongs; but cannot understand how Cruelty can teach People to *smile* at *Injuries*; but one would rather think it should be Cunning: But this it is to be counted a happy Man at Epithets.

I have the kindest Sounds to bless your Ear with. Kindness proceeds not from any Modification of Sounds, that ever I heard; I always took it for something more than meer Air, for kind Words may be spoke in very unkind or disagreeable Sounds,

Sounds, according to the Harmony of the Voice that ſpeaks them.

Taught him to bend his abject Head to Earth. Here *Mentor* is telling *Ulyſſes* of *Antinous* Pretenſions to *Penelope*, which were haughty and aſſuming in him, who was her Subject; ſo that ſhe rather taught him to bend his proud Head, for if it had been *abject*, he would not have rais'd it to his Royal Miſtreſs, and conſequently needed no Depreſſion or Bowing down.

Luſty Youth. Why that odious Word, when *vigorous* is much better, and more ſonorous?

Diana *thus on* Cynthus *ſhady Top,*
Or by Eurota's *Stream lead to the Chace*
Her Virgin Train, a thouſand lovely Nymphs
Of Forms Cœleſtial all, troop by her ſide.

This is a very unapt *Simile* to the preſent Purpoſe, with neither Beauty nor Illuſtration of the Story in it; for how unlike ſhe and her Court was to *Diana*, I need not tell any Body, who have read the Story, of the Outrages daily committed in her Court; but how pretty and poetical is the Phraſe, *Troop by her ſide*, every one can judge, that hears it daily uſed in diſdain, *Troop, Troop.*

My

My Cold enervate Hand, t' assert thy Cause. After *Ulysses* had talk'd of his Soul taking Fire within, he makes him begin to complain of his cold enervate Hand. If he had consulted *Homer*, he would not have made *Ulysses* complain of want of Vigour, who was able to shoot in his old Bow, and combate with all the *Suitors*.

Depend upon thy Providence, and Rule. I believe it is the first time that Providence was assign'd to a Mortal Man; but this was a grand Affair indeed, *Æthon* was to Pimp for *Eurymachus*, and therefore our Poet was resolv'd to honour him with *Rule* and *Providence*. Very great truly, and very surprizing.

Since Gods themselves submit to Fate, and thee. Here, speaking of Beauty, I think it had been better, if he had said, *the Gods submit themselves to Love, and thee*, because they command the Fates, who act by their Decrees.

Remarks on the Second Act.

Full many a Fathom down the Hero lies,
And never shall return -----

THIS is very poor and flat, nothing of the ſublime that *Homer* treats his Hero with; it ſavours a little too much of the *Biter*, is very dull and inſipid.

Till then be ſtill ---- to favour my Deſign
With low Submiſſions, with obſequious Duty,
And Vows of Friendſhip, fit to flatter Boys with,
I've wound my ſelf into the Prince's Heart.

This is a Speech neither juſt, nor fit to be ſpoken by *Antinous*, whoſe Character is ſtrangely wrong'd thro' the whole Fable, without giving any Reaſon for it.

Vernal Jove. He might as well, at other times, call him *Autumnal* or *Solſtitial Jove*; for he makes every thing of him, *Hoſpitable Jove*, *Vindictive Jove*, and gives him as many Offices as *Mercury* has Shapes.

The Huntreſs Cynthia. Very barbarous and unpoetical, for tho' *Diana* and *Cynthia* be one, the ſame Appellations are not proper to both, when diſtinguiſh'd under different Circumſtances; as *Cynthia*, ſhe is no Huntreſs, but a Goddeſs Re-

gent of the Moon; as *Diana*, ſhe may be call'd ſo, becauſe that was her Name on Earth, ſhe being Goddeſs of Woods and Forreſts, and in the Shades ſhe is call'd *Proſerpine*. Now, ſhe might as well be call'd the Huntreſs *Proſerpine* as *Cynthia*, ſhe having three Divinities aſſign'd her, one in Heaven, one on Earth, and one in Hell.

Methought I found me by a murm'ring Brook. Which all the Poets in the World won't make good Grammar of, without adding, *I found my ſelf*. He can find no Excuſe in this Caſe, where he neither confines himſelf to Number, Harmony, or Rhime.

Of me, thy Fellows, and our Sports unmindful. But why muſt *Diana*'s Nymphs be call'd her Fellows, they were rather her Siſters? but I think neither proper, for ſhe was not one of *Diana*'s Retinue, but a Votary at her Altars, quite different from the Senſe our Author puts upon it.

Nor dread the Anger of the awful Gods. 'Tis much *Telemachus*, who is commended for his Piety, ſhould perſwade his Miſtreſs not to fear the Gods, becauſe ſhe ſeem'd to have a Trouble of

Mind

Mind upon her. This is doing great Injuſtice to his Character, which indeed, throughout the whole Work, he has been ſo little mindful of, that he makes him guilty of very abſurd Crimes, as you will find in the following Remarks.

The gath'ring Storm,
That grumbles in the Air.

I think *grumbling* for a *Storm*, is one of the pooreſt Epithets I have met with, eſpecially in a Scene ſo well wrought up as this is, which *Envy* it ſelf muſt ſay is very beautiful and moving, I cannot ſay ſurprizing, for there is nothing in the whole Play that is ſo, but *Telemachus* forſaking his Mother contrary to his Father's Charge, and *Antinous* carrying her away, to no End nor Purpoſe, after he knew *Ulyſſes* was return'd, but to ſpin out another Act, when the Play was long enough before, and the whole Plot compleated.

And thou, Proſerpine,
Infernal Juno, *mighty Queen of Shades.*

Now, did I never know before, that *Proſerpine* was *Juno*, or that *Juno* was Queen of Shades; I defy him to ſhew me any Authority for it, and

I am ſure his own is not ſufficient to make her a Queen at all.

And thou, blue Neptune. Very fine indeed; by and by you will have him call'd *Sea-green Neptune*; but what ſignifies that? Poets are not to confine their Fancies to Colours, ſince they can make their Gods and Heroes what Colours they pleaſe.

Ev'n more than Zeal, with pious Prodigality
Beſtows upon their Gods, to feed their Prieſts with.

Why thus hard, good Mr. *Rowe*, upon the Prieſts? Ought not they to live by the Gods, whom they ſerve, as well as the Poets upon their third Nights, who oftner ſquander away more profuſely what the prodigal Libertines beſtow upon them, for reviling their Gods, than the other gets for attending on them at their Altars.

Nor envy thee thy King thy Bridal Night. That's very ſtrange, conſidering he was going to Bed with his Wife. I cannot believe *Ulyſſes* had ſo great a Command of himſelf, that he would have ſaid, he did not envy *Eurymachus* the Enjoyment of his *Penelope*; this is wronging *Ulyſſes*'s

Love

Love ſtrangely, or elſe Burleſquing *Homer*, who would have been very angry, I dare ſwear, to have been ſo us'd.

Remarks on the third Act.

Of baleful Acheron,
That rowls his livid Waves around the Damn'd.

A *Cheron* is a River, and no Perſon, conſequently it ought to have been, *rowls its livid Waves* ; a Nicety little regarded by our Author.

What muſt be, muſt be. An intollerable piece of Heroicks, to come from *Penelope* in ſuch a Tide of Paſſion, which one would have thought ſhould have produc'd ſomething more ſublime, at leaſt more ſurprizing.

------ *From Sea-green* Neptune's *Seats.* Here we have got another *Neptune*, the laſt was a *blue* one, this is a *green* one ; but I won't be too ſevere, perhaps he means *blue Neptune* in his *Sea-green Seats.*

Son

Son of my Youth, and Glory of my Strength. How he could be the Son of his Youth, I cannot underſtand, for the Poet tells you *Ulyſſes* left *Penelope* at eighteen, and was twenty Years abſent, ſo that *Telemachus* could not be much above twenty, and *Ulyſſes* ſays himſelf, he is now ſeventy, ſo that he could not be the Son of his Youth at fifty, conſidering he complains of his enervate Limbs already, which ſhews they were as old at ſeventy then, as we are now; for I know many a hail Man about Town, that are upwards of ſeventy.

In the wide untract Air. A very uncough Word, I am ſure, and fancy *tractleſs* more ſoft, and better Grammar, let him have what Authority he pleaſes to the contrary.

So Jove *look'd down upon the War of Atoms.* I don't believe our Author ever read of a War with Atoms, that *Jove* could have the Opportunity to look down upon, but that he has a Mind to make a War with good Senſe, and good Language.

Remarks

Remarks on the fourth Act.

The Prince *yet here! twice have I sought since Night,*
To pass in private to the Queen's Apartment.

THIS is a great Fault of the Poets, since *Telemachus* had been upon the Stage almost ever since the time he left the Queen there; and *Eurymachus* never perceiv'd by the Spectators to appear there, where he must have shewn himself, because that was the place only appointed by *Ulysses* for *Telemachus*, after he had parted with *Eurymachus*.

Not so, my Lord, for as I honour Truth,
Ev'n from her self did I receive the Charge.

Here *Telemachus*, *Ulysses*'s pious Son, is made to tell a Lie, and pawn his Honour upon it, when it did not serve the Purpose he design'd it for. Now, he ought not to have ly'd, or at least, if he did, the Poet should have taken care that the pious Lie should have succeeded; but instead of that, it is attended with Murder, and

after

after that, Disobedience to his Father's Commands, and the betraying of his Mother.

Grasp thy frail Life, and break like a Bubble,
To be dissolv'd, and mixt with common Air.

How easily might the last Line have been left out, then the Sense had been compleat, and we had had nothing of the Author's great Thoughts to mix with common Writers.

Traduc'd, dishonour'd by a Ruffian's Tongue. There could be no Provocation given to *Telemachus* great enough, to use such barbarous Language; besides, the Word *Ruffian* was below the Dignity of a Prince of such high Breeding as *Telemachus* to make use of; it is no ways justifiable, and therefore I cannot pass it by.

Eager with Joy, I threw me at his Feet. You may find, by being twice guilty of the same Fault, the Poet is fond to be thought one that scorns to submit himself to Rule or Grammar; for if the third Person had been represented, it had been just, *he threw me*; but *I threw me*, is false, and an improper Expression.

---- By

—— *By happier Frauds excell'd.* The Poet ought not to permit *Ulysses*'s Enemy to accuse him of Frauds, whom the Gods call'd just and pious. But here is a double Fault in this Act, the one is in entering upon fresh Matter at a time when the whole *Drama* ought to be finish'd; and the other is *Antinous* trusting *Arcos* with what he should have committed to none but himself.

Remarks on the fifth Act.

THIS Act, and the latter part of the fourth, is all needless and inconsistent, for what need is there of the Funeral of *Eurymachus*, and *Semanthe*'s Speech to the *Samiam* Soldiers, since neither of them contribute any thing to the grand Action of the Play; and 'tis a foolish Supposition to imagine the Audience can be imposed on in the Business of *Antinous*, when he knew his Master was come home, and at the same time make *Telemachus* have such an Interest in the *Ithacans*, when *Antinous* had pre-engag'd them, that he restores his Mother, quells the Insurre-

ction, and does a thousand miraculous Actions in the twinkling of an Eye, when he is half distracted about *Semanthe*; and just before this great Revolution is brought about by him, he renounces all Commerce with the World, and values not what shall happen, *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn*, *Winter*, all are alike to him; 'tis not worth his Care without *Semanthe*; and yet this careless Lover, in the very next Scene, when you think to hear no more of him, enters in a Fury, and drives all his Enemies off the Stage, no Body can tell how or wherefore.

Huge gabling Crowds gather. Now every Body expected to see a parcel of Geese enter; but when they found themselves deceiv'd, look'd strangely upon one another. The Solemnity of the Play prevented Laughter, else here had been sufficient Occasion.

'Till from the curled Darlings of the Youth. I can no more understand the Meaning of this Line, I do declare, than if it had been writ in the *Chinese* Language. It is mark'd as a Quotation, and perhaps may be a Translation out of some of the *Oriental* Tongues, which I suppose our Author is well vers'd in.

My

My Heart-ſtrings break, and all my Senſes fail. How much more compleat had both the Senſe and Verſe been, if to the former added, it had run thus :

I feel the Icy Hand of Death prevail,
My Heart-ſtrings breaking, -----

The beauteous Queen, whom in Deſpight of them
And thee, this happy Night I made my Prize.

Antinous ſpeaks this to *Ulyſſes*, and tells a Lie which all the Audience muſt be ſenſible of beforehand, becauſe *Arcos* went away with the Queen, and ſhe was not ſo long time abſent from *Ulyſſes*, as for *Antinous* to ſay, This happy Night he had enjoy'd her, which he makes *Ulyſſes* to believe againſt Reaſon, when he ſays, He triumphs in the Rape. But the whole Buſineſs of this Act, is a *Hodg-Podg*, and in my Opinion, has much ecclips'd the Beauty of this Play, founded upon ſo good a Story, and otherwiſe ſo judiciouſly writ : But

Finis coronat opus.

Epilogue.

JUST going to take Water, at the Stairs
I ſtopp'd, and came again to beg your Pray'rs.
You ſee how ill my Love has been repaid,
That I am like to live and die a Maid.
Poetick Rules and Juſtice to maintain,
I to the Woods am order'd back again,
To Madam Cynthia, *and her Virgin Train.*
'Tis an uncomfortable Life they lead,
Inſtead of Quilts and Down, the Silvan Bed
With Skins of Beaſts, with Leaves and Moſs is ſpread:
No Morning Toilets *do their Chambers grace,*
Where famous Pearl Coſmeticks find a Place,
With Powder for the Teeth, and Plaiſter for the Face.

But

Epilogue.

But in Defiance of Complexion, they,
Like errant House-wives, rise by break of Day:
Cut a brown Crust, Saddle their Nags, and mounting,
In scorn of the Green-sickness, ride a Hunting.
Your Sal *and* Hartshorn-drops *they deal not in;*
They have no Vapours, nor no witty Spleen:
No Coffee to be had, and I am told,
As to the Tea they drink, 'tis mostly cold.
For Conversation, nothing can be worse,
'Tis all amongst themselves, and that's the Curse:
One Topick there, as here, does seldom fail,
We Women rarely want a Theme to rail:
But bating that one Pleasure of Backbiting,
There is no Earthly thing they can delight in.
There are no Indian *Houses to drop in*
And fancy Stuffs, and chuse a pretty Screen,

Epilogue.

To while away an Hour or so, ------ I swear
The Cups are pretty, but they're deadly dear;
And if some unexpected Friend appear,
The Devil! who cou'd have thought to meet you (here?

We shou'd but very badly entertain
You, that delight in Toasting and Champaign;
But keep your tender Persons safe at home.
We know you hate hard Riding: But if some
Tough, Honest, Country Fox-hunter would come
Visit our Goddess, and her Maiden Court,
'Tis ten to one, but we may shew him Sport.